(c) the action taken by Government for the observance of the guidelines issued for the development of the backward districts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) 147 districts have been identified for coverage under the Backward Districts Initiative of the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana, initiated in the Tenth Five Year Plan.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Committees have been set up at the District, State and Central level to ensure adherence to the guidelines issued for the Backward Districts Initiative of the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana.

Eradication of poverty and unemployment

1763. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have evolved an action plan to eradicate poverty and unemployment within a period often years; and

(b) if so, the present status of the extent of poverty and unemployment in the country, State-wise and the strategy and the details of the plan of action contemplated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) and (b) Reduction of poverty and providing gainful employment at least to the addition to the labour force are the two monitorable targets for the Tenth plan period and beyond. It is recognized that gainful employment can only come from robust growth of economy especially in labour using sectors.

Although growth has strong direct poverty-reducing effects, there is also a need to ensure equity and social justice. A three-pronged strategy for attaining equity and social justice along with high rates of growth was adopted in the Tenth Plan period:

- Agricultural development must be viewed as a core element of the Plan, since growth in this sector is likely to lead to the widest spread of benefits especially to the rural poor.
- The growth strategy of the Tenth Plan must ensure rapid growth of those sectors, which are most likely to create gainful employment opportunities and deal with the policy constraints, which discourage growth of employment. Particular attention must be paid^to the policy environment influencing a wide range of sectors,

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

which have a large employment potential. These include sectors such as agriculture, including social forestry, animal husbandry, fishing, horticulture and related areas, small and medium industries, construction, tourism, transport, IT and Communication enabled services, retailing, financial sector, education and health.

- There will be a continuing need to supplement the impact of growth with special programmes aimed at special target groups, which may not benefit sufficiently from the normal growth process. National Food for Work Programme is being implemented and President has given assent to The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005.

State-wise percentage of people below poverty line and State-wise unemployment rates as available from 55th round (1999-2000) of National sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) are given below:

Unemployment rates and percentage of population below poverty line in selected States-1999-2000*

States/UTs	Percentage : of persons below poverty line	Unemployment Rate* (%)
Andhra Pradesh	15.77	8.03
Assam	36.09	8.03
Bihar	42.60	7.32
Gujarat	14.07	4.55
Haryana	8.74	4.77
Himachal Pradesh	7.63	2.96
Karnataka	20.04	4.57
Kerala	12.72	20.97
Madhya Pradesh	37.43	4.45
Maharashtra	25.02	7.16
Orissa	47.15	7.34
Punjab	6.16	4.03
Rajasthan	15.28	3.13
Tamil Nadu	21.12	11.78
Uttar Pradesh	31.15	4.08
West Bengal	27.02	14.99
Delhi	8.23	4.18
ALL INDIA	26.10	7.32

*On current Daily Status basis.